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THE HEADINGS OF THE PSALMS

It is the purpose of this article to treat of the reliability of the headings of the Psalms; to show that, as far as the evidence goes, there is a reasonable ground for believing that the headings are what they purport to be.

No one can doubt that comparative literature and history are in favor of the probability of psalms having been composed in Hebrew as early as the time of Jacob. Before Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, the Sumerians and Egyptians had hundreds of poems used in the temple worship of their gods.¹ And the Hebrew language was certainly used in Palestine and Syria long before the time of Thothmes III.² That Jacob may have composed the blessing recorded in Gen. xlix. is not, therefore, a question of language so much as one of predictive prophecy. That Moses could have composed and written Exodus xv, Deut. xxxii and xxxiii and the other poetical parts of the Pentateuch and, also, the 90th Psalm may for like reason be maintained and believed. So, likewise, the songs of Deborah and Hannah (Judg. v and 1 Sam. ii) may, for ought anyone *knows* to the contrary, have been composed by these two women, as the superscriptions indicate. As to David himself 2 Sam. i. 17 expressly attributes to

¹ Frequent references to songs and musical instruments used in the temples occur already in the time of Gudea. See F. Thureau-Dangin, *Die Sumerischen und Akkadischen Königsinschriften (passim)*. For music among the ancient Egyptians, see especially Erman, *Aegypten und Aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*. I. 340 f, II. 521 f.

² Thothmes III, on his inscriptions at Karnak which describe his conquests in Asia, gives a list of the cities of Palestine and Syria conquered by him. This list is still preserved on three of the pyla or gates. The names of the cities are almost all certainly Hebrew. See W. Max Müller, in *Die Palestinaliste Thutmosis III*.

THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

A REVIEW*

The distinguished president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has made a distinct and very important place for himself in the modern religious world. He has come to be spokesman not merely for the Southern Baptist Church or for the Baptist Churches in America, but also, to a considerable extent, for the Baptist Churches throughout the world. And there are many in other communions also who look to him as to their spiritual guide. Nevertheless, spokesman though he is for a large section of the evangelical Christian Church, he has yet preserved a full measure of individuality both in thought and expression; and in addition to other graces of style, a delightful humor, manifested especially in spoken discourse, is fruitful also in his published work, though if it is there exercised directly at all, it is exercised so gently as not to mar in the slightest the real gravity and sincerity of the discussion.

It is not surprising to find that this latest work of so distinguished an author is an important contribution to religious literature and that it is a very delightful book to read. Dr. Mullins has placed the Christian public distinctly in his debt.

With a very large part of what the author says we are in heartiest agreement. He sees clearly that the religious issue of the present day is not between two varieties of evangelical Christianity, but between Christianity on the one hand and something that is radically opposed to Christianity on the other. He insists, also, upon a genuine theism, as over against that pantheizing way of thinking which is so prevalent at the present time. "What is the difference," he asks, "between a

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God locked out of the world, and a God locked in?"¹ The God of Dr. Mullins is a transcendent, as well as an immanent, God; he is no mere additional name for the totality of the universe, but the Creator and Ruler of all.

Such a genuine theism, our author sees further, involves the possibility of miracles; Dr. Mullins rejects resolutely that "compromise" between Christianity and the new "religion of biology" which is found in a religion based upon a "non-Christian theism":

One of the most unfortunate phases of the present situation is that there are leaders of thought, calling themselves Christian, who are merely theists. The danger lies in putting the Christian label on a non-Christian or half-Christian world-view. This so-called Christian or half-Christian world-view classes Jesus with Plato, Buddha, Socrates and other great teachers. His knowledge of God was due to his human instinct, not to a unique relation as divine Son to an eternal Father. His supernatural works and resurrection from the dead are disallowed as contrary to natural law. The future life is accepted, but no appeal is made in its defense to the resurrection of Christ.²

Dr. Mullins correctly sees that this non-Christian theism is in actual practice unstable. At this point he agrees with what seems to us to be perhaps the root idea of Bishop Gore's recent trilogy—the idea, namely, that although theoretically no doubt theism may be held without an acceptance of the miracles of the New Testament and without an acceptance of the supernatural revelation which the Bible records, yet practically it always tends under such conditions to fall back into some lower view: those who reject the miracles may try to be theists, but their theism often turns out to be merely a "higher pantheism." Dr. Mullins puts the thing very well in a passage which is the continuation of the one that we have just quoted:

This form of so-called Christian [really non-Christian] theism is always under the influence of the law of physical continuity. It feels constantly the backward pull of Naturalism. It begins well but comes to a bad end. It sets out to recognize human personality with its meaning, and ends by denying the resurrection of the body and leaving a half instead of a

¹ P. 105.

² P. 121.

whole man. It sets out with the idea of the personality of God and pares down the conception almost beyond recognition in particular applications.³

But this non-Christian theism (which tends to become no theism at all) not only is unstable, but also fails utterly to satisfy man's religious needs:

If the idea of a personal God is to be of any value for men, God must be a Being who can *do* things. An idle God who does nothing is of no avail. And a God who can do no more than nature does is of no avail. In that event we are locked up hopelessly in the chain of continuity along with God.⁴

Thus our author pleads not only for theism, but for a consistent theism; and a consistent theism involves the acceptance of the Biblical miracles, their attestation being what it is. Dr. Mullins presents cogently the attestation of the miracles: and, what is more, he does not explain them away; he does not speak of them as being manifestations of some "higher law," but allows them apparently to remain as immediate acts of God to be distinguished sharply from His works of providence. It is true, he does say in arguing against a certain type of modern biologist:

Now a consistent logic would see in this supernatural revelation through Christ, the next stage in the upward course of the universe. A well-poised judgment, a judicial frame of mind, would see the new stage as the necessary outcome of the old.⁵

If these sentences are intended to represent the author's own view they are disappointing, and certainly they are out of accord with the rest of the book. Dr. Mullins does not elsewhere represent the supernatural revelation through Christ as the necessary result of a previous upward course of the universe; but he would represent it, if we understand him aright, as involving a redemption from sin, and a redemption from sin that was absolutely mysterious and undeserved. We hope that the author at this point is intending merely to

³ Pp. 121 f.

⁴ P. 127.

⁵ P. 150.

construct an *argumentum ad hominem* against the naturalistic biologists, and not to present his own view.

Another point of our agreement with Dr. Mullins is found in his clear recognition of the grounding of Christianity in historical facts. He does, it is true, at times separate fact from doctrine in a way that we regard as subject at least to misunderstanding:

I shall not deal primarily with theological doctrines. I am chiefly concerned here with the Christian facts.⁶

And again:

By the Christian religion, I mean that religion of which Jesus Christ is the center and of which the New Testament is the record. I do not mean any doctrinal system which has arisen since the New Testament was written. So far as this argument is concerned the Nicene and Chalcedonian decisions as to the Person of Christ and the Godhead, might be blotted out of existence. So also might other schemes of doctrine, the Calvinistic, Arminian and so on. The main question concerns the realities set forth in the record of the life and work of Jesus Christ. All the vital and essential elements of the doctrinal systems would come back if we should make a new start from the facts. And while I have the profoundest appreciation of the need and value of correct doctrines, nevertheless the argument of this book is concerned primarily with facts rather than formal systems of doctrine.⁷

And again:

The purpose here has been to make clear the issue now before the religious world. Fundamentally it is an issue as to the facts of Christian history, and the facts of Christian experience. A doctrine of incarnation, of sin and atonement, of the deity of Christ, of regeneration and justification and so on through the great circle, is implicit in all that has been said. But the strength of the Christian position is the stability of the foundations in the New Testament records, the deeds of Christ in history, and the experience of redemption through his power. Doctrines are inevitable as arising out of these facts. Indeed a statement of many of the facts is virtually the statement of the doctrines. But for the purposes in view in the present discussion, formal doctrinal discussion has not been necessary.⁸

In these passages there is in our judgment an element that is good, and there is also an element that is misleading.

The element that is misleading is found, as has already

⁶ P. 24.

⁷ P. 43

⁸ Pp. 272 f.

been intimated, in the undue separation between fact and doctrine. Dr. Mullins sometimes gives the impression that what we have in the New Testament are the bare facts, while the doctrinal interpretation of the facts is left to later generations. It is hardly to be supposed that such is actually his meaning, but certainly he does give that impression. At any rate the impression is quite incorrect. It is certainly not true to say that the New Testament presents merely the facts and leaves it to later generations to set forth the meaning of the facts. On the contrary the New Testament sets forth the meaning of the facts, as well as the facts themselves; and it sets forth the meaning of the facts as a result of supernatural revelation. From the beginning, the apostles said not merely, "Christ died"—that would have been a bare fact—but they said, "Christ died for our sins," and that was a doctrine. And so we do not think at all that the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds are merely inferences from the facts that are set forth in the Bible. On the contrary they are systematizations of the doctrinal instruction that was given by the inspired writers themselves. Also we are not for a moment satisfied with regarding the Calvinistic system (which happens to be the system that we hold) as a mere inference from Biblical facts. On the contrary it is a systematization of what the Bible says in the sphere not merely of bare facts but of doctrine. And we do not think that devout Arminians would be satisfied with regarding *their* system as merely an inference from the facts. They regard it as a systematization of what the Bible teaches. The only question is whether the Bible teaches Arminianism or Calvinism. We think that it teaches Calvinism; the Methodists think that it teaches Arminianism; but in either case the system arose not by a mere independent process of reflection upon the data provided by Biblical facts, but by an effort to gather up the doctrinal instruction that is actually contained in the Biblical books.

In the last passage that we have quoted it is said: "Fundamentally it is an issue as to the facts of Christian history, and the facts of Christian experience." We have just been dis-

cussing this passage so far as it concerns the relation which doctrine sustains to the facts of history. But it also seems to concern the relation which doctrine sustains to "the facts of Christian experience." Dr. Mullins says: "But the strength of the Christian position is the stability of the foundations in the New Testament records, the deeds of Christ in history, and the experience of redemption through his power." And then he continues: "Doctrines are inevitable as arising out of these facts." Here again we think that the words are at least misleading. Does the author mean that we have (1) the bare historical facts, (2) the experience of redemption through Christ's power (that is, "the facts of Christian experience"), and then (3) "the doctrines"? Does he mean that doctrine is logically subsequent to the facts of Christian experience? We can hardly think that that is his meaning, in view of the whole tenor of his book. But in this passage, and perhaps in some other places, he might seem to an unwary reader to be creating that impression.

At any rate the impression would certainly be unfortunate. It is quite incorrect to say that not only the historical facts about Christ but also the facts of Christian experience come first and then the doctrinal interpretation of these facts comes afterwards. On the contrary it is of the very essence of Christianity that doctrine comes (logically though not temporally) before Christian experience. The presentation of the bare fact that "Christ died" never was an instrument in saving a single soul; what saves souls—and what has saved souls from the very beginning of the Church's life—is the blessed *doctrine* that "Christ died *for our sins*." Doctrine, in other words, is not a mere inference from the gospel, but it is itself the gospel.

We do not think that Dr. Mullins has made that quite clear; and certain paragraphs of his, if taken by themselves, might seem to contradict it. Such is the element that we think to be misleading in his exposition of the relation between facts and doctrine. But in that exposition there is also an element that we hold to be good; and we turn gladly to the pleasanter duty of pointing out what that element is.

The thing that our author is driving at in his insistence upon the factual, as distinguished from doctrinal, character of his present discussion is that the Modernism of the present day differs from evangelical Christianity not merely in its interpretation of the facts but also in its attitude to the facts themselves. The impression is constantly produced, at least upon the lay mind, that the Modernist theologians accept the facts about Christ and merely present a new interpretation of the facts. Dr. Mullins' book brings a most forcible and salutary correction of any such impression. The real issue is not so much whether the meaning which the New Testament and the creeds of the Church assign to the great redeeming events is correct, but whether the events really took place. Was Christ born of a virgin? Did he work miracles? Did his body emerge from the tomb by the power of God? Modernism says "No"; Christianity says "Yes." It is not merely a question of "interpretation," but it is primarily a question of fact; it is not a question what the meaning of the New Testament is but whether what the New Testament says is true or false. Dr. Mullins deserves the thanks of the Church for having made the issue so clear.

Accordingly, we rejoice in the testimony to the facts of the New Testament record (and also really to the redemptive significance of the facts) which is contained in this notable book. At the same time we should not be giving to the book the consideration that it deserves if we did not point out the measure of our disagreement with it. Such a book deserves more than perfunctory praise; it deserves really careful consideration. And careful consideration, here as frequently, involves a certain amount of disagreement.

It ought to be observed, however, that the disagreement, though it is not altogether without importance, is distinctly a disagreement between friends. In the time of crisis that now appears in the Church, we have often been obliged to argue with men who (despite friendly personal relations) are, in the sphere of principle, not our friends, but opponents of everything that we hold most dear. It is therefore rather refreshing

to engage, for once, in argument with a true friend. Such argument, it may be hoped, may lead, if not at once to agreement, at least to better mutual understanding and ultimately to a better common service of the evangelical cause.

The central point with regard to which we disagree with Dr. Mullins is found in his sharp separation between the spheres of science and philosophy and religion :

What are the rights involved in the modern controversy about religion? There are at least three great rights to be considered: the rights of science, the rights of philosophy, and the rights of religion. No one will dispute the general statement that the right of each of these is freedom to pursue its own task in its own way. Confusion and conflict arise when these tasks and the corresponding rights are forgotten. . . .

Physical science deals with nature. It observes facts and phenomena. It traces sequences and causes. It explains events in nature by antecedents. It assumes continuity in all events. It rigidly limits itself to explanation in one particular way. In a word, science works with the principle of causality.

Philosophy, on the other hand, seeks to find satisfaction for the reason. It assumes the facts and data supplied by science and experience. Its chief aim is to find a single principle which will explain the universe. . . . Philosophy works with the principle of rationality.

Religion differs from science and philosophy in that its chief quest is for God and salvation from sin. Religion is a personal relation. It seeks adjustment with the infinite life. . . . Religion works with the principle of personality.⁹

It is true, Dr. Mullins does admit that science, philosophy and religion "are harmonious and should coöperate" and that they are alike in that they "all seek to know the truth." He also admits that there are points of contact and overlapping between them. "Religion," he says, "is not irrational, science is not concerned to deny personality, and philosophy must take account of both." "There is," he continues, "necessarily a higher unity in which some day these three will meet when their tasks are done."¹⁰

Meanwhile, however, the three are each of them, according to our author, autonomous; and when one of them "has attempted to invade the sphere of the other, trouble has

⁹ Pp. 30-32.

¹⁰ P. 32.

arisen.”¹¹ “Christians make a mistake when they invade the scientific sphere and seek to impose alien principles and criteria and to make demands based on unwarranted assumptions.”¹² On the other hand, “it is also true that science and philosophy commit an equally grievous sin when they attempt to invade the religious realm.”¹³

This principle of the sharp separation between science and philosophy and religion leads, we think, logically into an abyss of skepticism. Of course we do not for a moment mean to imply that Dr. Mullins carries it out to any such dire conclusion. On the contrary he contradicts it almost at every turn: indeed the very centre of his book, with its insistence upon the factual basis of Christianity, is really a protest against his own separation between religion and science; and his exultant theism is really a protest against his own separation between religion and philosophy. Yet the false principle—deserted though it is at many points by a salutary inconsistency in which we heartily rejoice—is present, and again and again it turns up to mar the clearness of the author’s defence of the Christian faith. It is not merely a momentary phenomenon in Dr. Mullins’ thinking, but has entered rather deeply into his entire attitude in the crisis of the present day. Consideration of it is necessary in any careful view of the present book.

Let us see, in the first place, how the supposed separation between science and religion works out. Of course as it is ordinarily interpreted it at once destroys the entire doctrinal or factual basis of the Christian religion. The conflict between science and religion, it is often said, may be very easily settled: religion may hold to a realm of ideals; but science must be given the entire realm of facts. It is perfectly evident that our author does not acquiesce in any such settlement of the conflict as that; for he insists that certain facts, such as the appearance of Jesus upon the earth and His

¹¹ P. 32.

¹² P. 33.

¹³ P. 33.

resurrection from the dead, are absolutely necessary to the Christian religion. But what is to be made of a passage like the following:

So-called conflicts between science and the Bible are all imaginary. The Bible is the inspired literature of religion. Science is the uninspired literature of nature. These two literatures move on different levels. They can never collide any more than an eagle flying high in the air can collide with a lion walking on the earth.¹⁴

Or this:

So also with science and religion. They are distinct in the forms of reality with which they deal: matter and spirit. They are distinct in their aims—classified knowledge of nature, and redemption. They are distinct in the principles of causation which they wield: continuity and freedom. They are distinct in their methods of verification: objective experimentation and spiritual experience. But underneath all these diversities there is a common unifying bond: the desire for truth. For science truth is formulated knowledge of the world. For religion it is the clearly expressed meaning of the immediate experience of God. As there is no way to merge the differences in the unity, so there is no way to cancel the unity by the differences.¹⁵

Such assertions, we are compelled to believe, lead logically to skepticism. But fortunately they are not true. We agree, to be sure, that the "so-called conflicts between science and the Bible are all imaginary"; but we think that these conflicts are all imaginary not because the Bible does not teach things with which science has a right to deal, but because what the Bible says about those things is true. There are, indeed, many departments of science with which the Bible does not deal; but in the departments into which it does enter it does, we think, represent the facts as they are.

Our meaning may become plain if we take as an example the resurrection of Christ. That event, if it really took place, was an event in the external world: a certain tomb near Jerusalem first contained the body of Jesus and then became empty. Is the question whether it became empty, and is the related question whether natural causes can be found for its becoming empty, to be regarded as a matter for scientific in-

¹⁴ P. 26.

¹⁵ P. 56.

vestigation or not? Do these questions belong to science? And if they do belong to science, do they also belong to religion?

This last question, according to the letter of what Dr. Mullins says, would have to be answered in the negative. Religion, according to our author, deals with "spirit" as distinguished from "matter."¹⁶ But the question of the resurrection of our Lord, in accordance with the common-sense definition of "resurrection" which Dr. Mullins certainly holds, does concern "matter"; it concerns the emergence or non-emergence of the body from the tomb. Therefore, because of the sharp separation between the spheres of science and of religion, it cannot be a religious question at all.

Such is the logical conclusion to be drawn from the utterances to which we object. Yet the conclusion is emphatically rejected by Dr. Mullins himself: almost the root idea of his book is that the Christian religion is based upon external happenings like the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb.

We are therefore forced apparently upon the other horn of the dilemma: since the question of the resurrection of Christ is certainly a religious question, and since religion and science are quite distinct in their subject-manner, it cannot be a scientific question; there can be no scientific certitude, whatever religious certitude there may be, with regard to the miracle of the resurrection.

Now just exactly this position is held by a very large body of persons in the modern world; indeed it is on the basis of this position that the modern attack upon the factual basis of Christianity to a very considerable extent has come. All that can be established by science—that is, scientific history—it is said, is simply the belief of the disciples in the resurrection; and the question what caused that belief is a question not for scientific history but for "faith." The practical result of such a position is of course skepticism; for very naturally, when "faith" is thus deprived of its proper basis in knowl-

¹⁶ P. 56.

edge, it fails to establish anything whatever, and the miracle is given up.

What is Dr. Mullins' attitude toward such assertions? Logically he ought to agree with them; for they seem to follow quite logically from his sharp separation between science and religion. But as a matter of fact we are glad to say that he does nothing of the kind. In an interesting passage he seems to express his sharp dissent from those students of the New Testament who "repudiate the right of the critical scholar to indulge in dogmatic negations [and, we may add, affirmations] about the supernatural elements in the New Testament":

As I see it, the view of these critics as to the relation of historical science to supernatural facts, is incorrect. If it is meant that we do not fully understand supernatural causes I raise no objection. We do not fully understand any causes, natural or supernatural. In so far as a man's attitude will influence his interpretation of the historical data, I raise no question. We all bring a subjective element to bear upon facts. But to affirm that a supernatural event, like the resurrection of Jesus, lies outside the realm of historical research, is to rob history of its most vital factor. . . . Thus we come to the absurd conclusion that the Christian movement in history, the most momentous of all movements, arose out of something which lies outside the range of historical research.¹⁷

These are golden words. It is true, we cannot give unqualified approval to what immediately follows them, where supernatural events like the resurrection of Christ are brought into analogy with the new factors which the evolutionary hypothesis is obliged to recognize. Such an analogy may be held to obscure the sharp distinction between miracles and those works of God which, however "new" and however surprising to us they may be, are part of the natural order. But the words that we have just quoted are themselves, we think, thoroughly sound, and they constitute a complete refutation of the sharp separation between religion and science to which we object. It should be noticed in particular that the author refers to historical research as "historical science." Such a use of the word "science" is, we think, quite correct;

¹⁷ Pp. 181 f.

science can establish, and if it be truly scientific will actually establish, the resurrection of our Lord. Yet the resurrection of our Lord is vitally important for religion. The Bible then, in recording the resurrection, most emphatically does teach science; and the separation between science and religion breaks down.

We are in harmony therefore with Dr. Mullins himself (in other elements of his thinking) if we disagree with him rather sharply when he says: "The greatest recent gain in thought about religion and science is the increasing recognition of the distinctiveness of their spheres."¹⁸ For our part we hold that the notion of the distinctiveness of the spheres of science and religion, far from being a great recent gain, is one of the chief forms that have been assumed by modern unbelief, and that its increasing prevalence is one of the most disastrous features of our time. It is highly significant that this notion of the separation between religion and science is held by a certain distinguished biologist whose rejection of the supernatural our author is refuting with much learning and skill. Dr. Mullins himself quotes the passage:¹⁹ "Strictly speaking, science and religion deal with different subjects. The purpose of science is knowledge, of religion faith and conduct." "The organ of science primarily is intellect, of religion the emotions and will; the goal of science is mechanism, of religion spirit." To do our author justice he does not himself formulate the separation between science and religion in the way in which it is formulated by this advocate of naturalism.²⁰ But with the separation itself he himself, in some places in his book, formally at least, agrees; and in doing so he has adopted one of the chief shibboleths of modern skepticism. The biologist of whom we have just spoken has a right to represent "the increasing recognition

¹⁸ P. 59.

¹⁹ P. 86.

²⁰ Indeed, on p. 108, he seems to be polemic against it. "The fact is," he says, "that religion includes cognition or knowledge as well as emotion."

of the distinctiveness" of the spheres of religion and science as "the greatest recent gain in thought about religion and science"; certainly it *is* the greatest recent gain in thought from his point of view: but when a Christian theologian regards it so he is introducing a skeptical lever into the foundation of his Christian belief, which if allowed to remain will cause the entire building to fall.

The inconsistency which we have just found in Dr. Mullins' book may be due partly to his employment of the word "science" now in a broader and now in a narrower sense. At one time, as we have already observed, he uses it in a sense broad enough to include historical research; but at another time apparently it designates merely such sciences as physics and biology, or at any rate only those methods of research that operate merely with the doctrine of "physical causation." But for our part, we are unable to regard even physics and biology as being without rights in the sphere of religion; and at any rate we deprecate the narrowing of the use of the word "science." That word ought to be used in a sense broad enough to include, for example, theology. Theology, we think, is just as scientific as chemistry; and if we fail to recognize its scientific character we are in danger of delivering ourselves over to that anti-intellectualism which is now attacking the Christian religion at its roots, and which is also, by the way, leading rapidly in the modern world into a very lamentable intellectual decline. Dr. Mullins shares our conviction that Christianity is based upon truth; and it is in the interests of that conviction that we ask him to give up the separation between religion and science.

But if the separation of science from religion is unwarranted, so also, it may be remarked in passing, is the separation of science from philosophy. Dr. Mullins seems, in one place at least,²¹ to be supposing that there is such a thing as a "modern scientific criticism" of the New Testament which is independent of philosophical presuppositions, and the results of which can safely be accepted by men of differing

²¹ P. 196.

shades of philosophical and religious opinion—a modern scientific criticism which has established, for example, the “two-document theory” as to the synoptic gospels. As a matter of fact we do not think that such a neutral, purely scientific criticism exists. The study of the New Testament, even in the sphere of literary criticism, and certainly in the sphere of historical criticism, cannot get along without presuppositions; and the presuppositions of much of the criticism which our author apparently accepts as purely “scientific” are often really naturalistic—proceed, that is, upon the basis of a philosophy which Dr. Mullins himself rejects. Everywhere we are led to the same conclusion—the relations between science and religion and between science and philosophy are very much closer than our author seems to suppose; the independence of science is by no means so complete as he is inclined to represent it as being. That conclusion is certainly not dishonoring to science. On the contrary we object to the independence of science only because we insist that the sphere in which science moves is so very broad. That sphere is broad enough to include even the knowledge of God that He has given us in nature and in His Word. There is a breadth and sweep about true science of which many scientists have no conception; true science takes account, not merely of some, but of all of the facts. And if it takes account of all of the facts it will not neglect what God has told us about Himself.

We are not at all sure but that Dr. Mullins would himself agree with us here; but there are passages in his book which seem to make the thing obscure; there are passages in his book where he seems to present what we are constrained to regard as an incorrect view of the separation of science both from philosophy and from religion.

Equally unfortunate, we think, and equally inconsistent with the real aim of the book, are certain things that are said about philosophy. At times philosophy, like science, is given an unwarranted independence, and, as is also the case with science, in being given independence is at the same time narrowed and degraded.

“Philosophy,” Dr. Mullins says, “works with the principle of rationality; religion with personality.”²² But what can be made out of such a disjunction? How can religion possibly work with the principle of personality without also working with the principle of rationality, which personality certainly involves? And how can philosophy possibly work with the principle of rationality without also working with the principle of personality, if, as Dr. Mullins believes, it is objectively true that a personal God is the author of all being?

But it is necessary to look a little more closely at this principle of “rationality.” And when we look at it a little more closely, it seems to lead to a skeptical conclusion so far as philosophy is concerned. Any one of a number of contradictory philosophies is apparently regarded as good (*qua* philosophy) equally with any other, provided only it hangs together :

The philosopher is free to select his world-view on any level of reality from matter up to man and personality. It is perfectly legitimate, from the standpoint of reason, for a man to attempt to prove that matter is the fundamental reality, and that all else is reducible thereto. It is, of course, quite as legitimate to begin with man and spirit and personality and freedom, and explain all things from this point of view—or indeed from any intermediate point between matter and man. I am not here speaking of the cogency of the logic of the respective views, but only of the intellectual rights involved. The rights of reason cannot be gainsaid.²³

One sentence in this passage is, we confess, to us quite obscure. “I am not here speaking,” Dr. Mullins says, “of the cogency of the logic of the respective views, but only of the intellectual rights involved.” We confess that we do not see how any philosophy can possess “intellectual rights” if its logic is not cogent. But in general, despite what inconsistencies there may be in detail, the impression seems to be produced by Chapter viii of the book that philosophies must necessarily differ and that in the field of philosophy no one system can be established against the others; that any one of a number of contradictory systems can be regarded equally with the others as a “sound metaphysic” :

²² P. 164.

²³ Pp. 160 f.

The chief point here is that the great number of metaphysical systems indicates the variety in the perfectly legitimate forms of rationality. Philosophy, planting its feet firmly on scientific fact, or some fact of experience, moves out to the frontiers. By speculative thought it seeks to solve the ultimate problems. As a result of this effort there are now in existence a dozen or more world-views.

We recur now to our question: which of these many world-views answers to the requirements of a "sound metaphysic"? Each philosopher undoubtedly would claim that his own system does so; and if we are sound in our definition of philosophy, every one of them would be right. Each begins with a valid assumption or type-phenomenon. Each pursues legitimate method in constructing his system. Each world-view is unified and coherent, and attempts to explain all phases of being. No one of these contradictory systems can be read out of court on the ground that it is not "a sound metaphysic." It follows, therefore, that the phrase is meaningless when employed to discredit the evangelical Christian faith. That faith gives rise to its own metaphysic which bears perfectly valid credentials in the intellectual and philosophical realm. It is one of a dozen or more systems, all of which, of course, are not equally true, but which are equally "sound" as metaphysical efforts to explain the world.²⁴

Here again we confess to a certain amount of bewilderment: we do not see how two systems can be equally "sound" and not equally "true." But the main tenor of the passage, as of the whole chapter, is, we fear, fairly plain; it involves a discrediting of philosophy as a merely academic exercise to which religion can be more or less indifferent:

And this brings us to the crucial point. Religion cannot wait upon philosophy, because philosophy cannot supply a stable basis for religion. Every great religious verity is constantly called in question in philosophic thought. An adequate view of the soul is set forth strongly supported by rational arguments. But at once it is attacked and apparently destroyed by some other system. A clear demonstration of a personal God is set forth. But at once on some other assumption it is questioned and the clouds of uncertainty gather about the idea. We prove by philosophic reasoning the immortality of the soul. Before our ink dries on the page we hear the cynical reply of some "modern" man who asks: "Who are you to imagine that your survival after death is of any importance to the universe?" And not only so, he proceeds to construct a philosophic or speculative disproof of immortality which seems to many to be based upon a metaphysic just as "sound" as any other.

I am not implying in all this any question as to the rights of philosophy. Let men strive for as many insights as they will. Let the systems evolve into as many varieties as may be. Let the antagonisms and con-

²⁴ Pp. 162 f.

traditions become as sharp and decisive as temperament and assumption and speculative acumen may necessitate. In it all something is going on distinct from religion. The process is one which religion cannot employ save in a secondary way. This is not because religion is against reason but because it broadens reason into something richer and more conformable to human need than is the case with philosophy.²⁵

It will be observed that Dr. Mullins admits that philosophy has its "rights." But if those rights are only what they are here said to be, then they are but sorry "rights" after all, and philosophy is degraded from its high estate.

In order to see whether this account of the relation between philosophy and religion is true or false, it may be well, as in the case of the relation between science and religion, to take an example. In the former case we took as our example the question of the resurrection of Christ: that question, we saw, is a matter for scientific consideration, and yet is of vital importance to religion; by it therefore the separation between science and religion is disproved. In the present case we choose as our example the question of the existence of a personal God.

The question of the existence of a personal God belongs, Dr. Mullins will admit, to religion. There are, indeed, many persons in the modern world who would make no such admission; religion, these persons hold, is an ineffable experience which is not indissolubly connected with any particular intellectual conception of the nature of God. But with such persons Dr. Mullins certainly does not agree: he is neither a pragmatist nor a mystic; the Christian religion, he certainly holds, could never conceivably exist without a conviction on the part of its adherents that there is a personal God, Maker and Ruler of the world.

How, then, should the existence of such a God be established? The old answer to that question was that it should be established by the so-called "theistic proofs," in which an inference is drawn from the existence and from the character of the world to a personal Creator and Ruler. With these proofs must no doubt be included the "moral argu-

²⁵ Pp. 172 f.

ment" which infers from the presence of the moral law in the conscience of man the existence of a great Lawgiver.

Now evidently the consideration of these proofs belongs to philosophy; if this does not belong to it, nothing does. Philosophy, if it be philosophy at all, must at least consider (whatever answer it may give) the question whether the universe is to be explained ultimately by the existence of a personal God.

If then the theistic proofs belong to philosophy, the question becomes important what place Dr. Mullins assigns to these proofs. If he regards them as basically important to religion, then after all he has restored philosophy to what we regard as its rightful place. What then is his attitude to the philosophic proofs of the existence and personality of God?

It is not altogether easy to answer this question. Dr. Mullins quotes from Julian Huxley as follows:

There remains to search in the external world to find if possible a foundation of fact for the belief drawn from the inner world of mind, to test the conceptions of a supreme being or supereminent power against ever more and more touchstones of reality, until the most skeptical shall acknowledge that the final construction represents, with whatever degree of completeness, yet not a mere fragment reduced to fill a void, however inevitable, to satisfy a longing, however natural, but the summary, the essence of a body of verifiable fact, having an existence independent of the wishes or ideals of mankind.²⁶

This passage seems to set forth the desire which men have felt for the theistic proofs—that is for objectively valid arguments for the existence of God. Dr. Mullins' comment is as follows:

From the point of view of the author this is a finely expressed and comprehensive statement of the aim in view. The objection to it is that for religious purposes it is inadequate. To search in "the external world," for a foundation of fact for the "belief drawn from the inner world of mind," is just the ancient process of theologians to find a new proof of the existence of God. The "modern mind" has long ago pronounced such "proofs" unconvincing. And it must be said that the outcome is merely a philosophy of the universe, not a religion. The further result that "the most skeptical shall acknowledge" the truth of the outcome, is to convert religious certainty into a form of logic which deals not with

²⁶ Pp. 78 f.

religious forces, but with external facts of nature. Even intellectual stability is not attained in that way. The proof is conclusive, of course. But the "most skeptical" are very stubborn.²⁷

Here our author says that the "modern mind" is hostile to the theistic proofs. But what is his own attitude? We cannot help feeling that at this point he regards the "modern mind" with considerable sympathy. To be sure, he does say that "the proof is conclusive, of course." But in the context this is apparently to be regarded as almost ironical; and on the whole very little importance is here attributed to those proofs of the existence of God which operate with the "external facts of nature."²⁸

How then, according to our author, is the existence and personality of God to be established? We are afraid that the answer is: "Through Christ." The evangelical Christian faith "gives rise," Dr. Mullins says, "to its own metaphysic":²⁹

Christianity is primarily not a philosophy of the universe. It is a religion. It is not founded upon metaphysics. Like all things known to us, there is an implied philosophy. There is a certain view of God and nature and man and the world in the background of our faith. But Christianity is a historical religion, and a religion of experience. It is grounded in facts. Its credentials are well-established facts and clearly defined experiences. God has revealed himself to man in and through Jesus Christ. The Christian world-view rests upon these facts.³⁰

So also, after his depreciation of philosophy, in the course of which he points out the fact that the moment the existence of a personal God is established by one system of philosophy it is questioned by another,³¹ he says that "God has revealed himself to man through Christ,"³² that as a result of our "experience of God in Christ" Christianity has fulfilled the ideal of religion and has forever set religion free," that

²⁷ P. 79.

²⁸ Compare also the passage quoted on p. 54 from p. 172 of Dr. Mullins' book.

²⁹ P. 162.

³⁰ P. 163.

³¹ See the quotation on pp. 54-55 from p. 172 of Dr. Mullins' book.

³² P. 173.

hence "it stands on its own foundations, brings its own credentials, performs its own function."³³

It is difficult to avoid the impression that our author is here making the establishment of theism dependent upon the revelation of God that has come through Christ:

The plea that the eternal and universal truths of reason and religion are not dependent upon history cannot be made good. Christianity completes religion as an ideal, as an experience and as a program. To go behind Christ and his gospel by referring them to speculative philosophy, is to go backward and not forward.³⁴

And in one place Albrecht Ritschl is commended (despite an accompanying recognition of his errors), because "he retained the New Testament truth that we know God only through Christ."³⁵

Now for our part we hold it to be not a "New Testament truth" but a very serious error to say that "we know God only through Christ." At least we hold it to be a very serious error in the sense in which it is apparently meant by Dr. Mullins. There is indeed a sense in which it is true: the eleventh chapter of Matthew does seem to teach either that all knowledge of God which men have comes through the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Logos, or else that a really full, intimate knowledge of God—a knowledge worthy of the name—comes only through Christ. But to say that there is no valid establishment of the existence of a personal God apart from the historic manifestation of Jesus is to do despite, for one thing, to what the Bible (especially Jesus Himself) says about the revelation of God in nature. The Bible holds that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork." There is, as Paul says, a knowledge of God which ought to be obtained through the things that He has made.

It is true, this knowledge of God has been obscured. Of modern men as of the men of the first century it can be said that "their foolish heart was darkened." And that fact ex-

³³ Pp. 173 f.

³⁴ P. 174.

³⁵ P. 269.

plains those contradictions of philosophy with which Dr. Mullins is so much impressed. But the fault does not lie in philosophy but only in philosophers; the evidence for the existence of a personal God was spread out before us all the time, but we failed to discern it because of the intellectual effects of sin.

Now these effects of sin are removed by Christ. But that does not mean that He causes us to relinquish the theistic proofs which were open to us even in our unredeemed state, or that He causes us to despise that measure of understanding of those proofs which, through common grace, was attained even by unregenerate men. What it does mean is that we are enabled through the redemption offered by Christ to see clearly where formerly our eyes were darkened. The experience of regeneration does not absolve us from being philosophers, but it makes us better philosophers. And so far as the intellectual defence of Christianity is concerned, the fact should never be obscured that theism is the logical prius of faith in Christ. "Believe in God," said Jesus, "believe also in me." To reverse that order, is to throw the entire organism of apologetics out of joint. The old order of apologetics is correct: first, there is a God; second, it is likely that He should reveal Himself; third, He has actually revealed Himself in Christ. It is a very serious fault when the last of these points is put first.

Certainly we do not mean to deny that in actual experience it is through Christ that men are brought to believe in a personal God. It would be absurd to send men, in our effort to establish theism, to this teacher and that, and lead them to neglect the greatest teacher of all. And the greatest teacher of theism that has ever lived upon the earth is Jesus of Nazareth. In His teaching a theistic view of the world appears in its true reasonableness, and thus carries important credentials with it. But what we do affirm is that when the logical as distinguished from the temporal order is being established, theism does precede the acceptance of Jesus as Redeemer and Lord. The gospel sets forth the way in which God saved man; that gospel cannot be understood unless its presuppositions

are accepted; those presuppositions are the Christian view of God and the Christian view of man; and the Christian view of God is based upon theism.

Thus we disagree with our author in his low estimate of philosophy. "Is Christianity," he asks "dependent upon 'a sound metaphysic' in the ordinary popular meaning of that phrase?" "The reply," he answers, "is a decided negative"³⁶ Our reply, on the contrary, is a decided affirmative. We should hate to think that "the rational process in metaphysics is often in open antagonism to religion."³⁷ If we thought that, we should be in great danger of skepticism. On the contrary we hold for our part that wherever a process in metaphysics is in antagonism to Christianity it is not rational but irrational. Christianity does depend, we hold, upon a sound metaphysic. Only, that dependence fills us with no misgivings. For a sound metaphysic is not impossible of attainment; it may be attained wherever philosophers see clear. And philosophers come to see clear when their minds are illumined by the Holy Spirit of God.

We have spoken of Dr. Mullins' doctrine of the autonomy of science and of philosophy. It remains to speak of his doctrine of the autonomy of religion. But here we can perhaps speak more briefly; since most of what we should like to say is implied in what we have already set forth.

The autonomy of science and of philosophy is correlative, according to our author, to an autonomy of religion:

Religion also is autonomous. It has its own methods, its own criteria of truth, its own approach to the great Reality, and its own conditions for attaining certainty.³⁸

Fifth, religious certainty is religiously conditioned. . . . The Christian act of faith is a self-committal to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Instantly it brings the soul into contact with spiritual Reality.³⁹

Sixth, we are led by the preceding to the next principle: religious rationality is religiously achieved.⁴⁰

³⁶ Pp. 163 f.

³⁷ P. 164.

³⁸ P. 33.

³⁹ Pp. 46 f.

⁴⁰ P. 49.

It is clear from the preceding that disputants are working at cross-purposes when this truth as to religious rationality is not recognized on both sides. Use reason in the narrow Aristotelian sense and your conclusion about God and religion is insecure. It can be attacked on other logical grounds. But bring reason over into the larger context of the religious life itself and it attains stability.⁴¹

I note, as an eighth principle, that religious life and experience must be religiously evaluated. All kinds of confusions and controversies have arisen in recent times by failure to keep this truth in mind. How shall a critic approach religion? With what principles of explanation, with what tests of truth, with what norms and criteria of thought shall the various religions of the world be judged? There can be but one answer to these questions. Religion must be judged as religion.⁴²

But the more accurate and thorough and self-consistent is the physicist, chemist, biologist, or psychologist, the less justification he finds for bringing religion to the test of the non-religious sciences. . . . We must conceive it, define it, analyze it, expound it and defend it, not as physics, chemistry, biology, psychology or anything else, but as religion.⁴³

It is a false issue when men deal with religion as if it were physics or chemistry or biology, or psychology, or sociology. There is no necessary conflict between any of these and religion. But when men crave religion and a solution of its problems, then religious criteria must be employed.⁴⁴

It follows from this that we are on a false trail when we strive to make the Christian religion conform to science or philosophy, or anything else.⁴⁵

But it [the Christian faith] does not depend upon scientific research for its justification or vindication.⁴⁶

If these passages stood alone, they might seem to place our author in the full current of present-day anti-intellectualism. What is this "religious rationality" which is so distinct from other rationality, and which seems to absolve the Christian from subjecting his religion to the criteria of science and of philosophy? At first sight it might seem to be another name for that ineffable experience which the mystics make to be the sum-total of religion.

But such is plainly not the case: Dr. Mullins is no mystic;

⁴¹ P. 51.

⁴² P. 53.

⁴³ P. 54.

⁴⁴ P. 62.

⁴⁵ P. 230.

⁴⁶ Pp. 257 f.

he grounds Christianity in a genuine theism and in historic facts. In one passage at least he is definitely polemic against a view which "simply sets aside the history and transfers the problem of Christianity to the inner realm of our moral and spiritual intuitions."⁴⁷ It is true that in that very passage the transferring of the problem of Christianity "to the inner realm of our moral and spiritual intuitions" is repudiated not in the interests of a general objectivity of religious knowledge (which is what we should like to see done) but in the interests of what we regard as a somewhat anti-philosophical polemic against the validity of moral intuitions when they are not supported by the New Testament history. Still, it remains true that Dr. Mullins is not a mystic but a theist, and not a pragmatist but a believer in the objective validity of Christian theology. So much is established by the whole tenor of his book.

Nevertheless we hold the whole notion of a special "religious rationality" to be open to the gravest objections. What these objections are need not be set forth here in detail; for the simple reason that Dr. Mullins himself has really provided the best possible presentation of the objections in the whole course of his interesting book. Sometimes he provides even formal contradictions to those elements in the book to which we are now objecting. "It [the Christian faith] does not depend primarily upon what men usually call a sound metaphysic, although it rests upon unassailable philosophical foundations."⁴⁸ The second part of this sentence, however contradictory it may be to the former part, does seem to restore philosophy to its rightful place. And what is more important than such individual passages is the whole tenor of the book. Is religion entirely autonomous? Must it be tested only by itself? Dr. Mullins' own defence of the New Testament facts, on the basis of scientific historical criticism, is the best refutation of any such view.

Nevertheless, the epistemological error (so we are con-

⁴⁷ P. 179.

⁴⁸ P. 257.

strained to regard it) in certain passages in the book is not altogether unimportant; for however the consequences may be avoided (through a salutary inconsistency) by Dr. Mullins himself, those consequences are likely not to be altogether avoided by others. It is dangerous to adopt the shibboleths of modern anti-intellectualism in the course of an intellectual defence of the Christian faith.

Is there, then, no element of truth in this notion that religion possesses its own credentials and should be judged as religion and not as something else? There is, we think, such an element of truth.

In the first place, it is of course true that religion is far more than science and philosophy. A man might conceivably hold a perfectly correct view of God and of Christ, he might attain a complete intellectual acceptance of the facts that are at the basis of our religion; and at the same time not be a religious, or a Christian, man. Religion is not merely intellectual.

But although religion is not merely intellectual it *is* intellectual. Dr. Mullins himself says that it "includes cognition or knowledge as well as emotion."⁴⁹

In the second place, we admit freely that in human nature as it is at present constituted a full intellectual conviction of the truth of Christianity is not attained without the experience of the new birth; no man was ever brought to Christian conviction merely by argument.

But because argument is insufficient it does not follow that it is unnecessary. It is often an instrument that the sovereign Spirit of God is pleased to use. What the new birth does is not to absolve men from being scientific in their defence of the Christian faith, but rather to enable them to be truly scientific because a veil has been taken from their eyes.

In the third place, in application of what has just been said, we admit that there are certain convictions, so closely connected with the heart of religion that they can be called

⁴⁹ P. 108.

specifically religious, without which a conviction of the truth of Christianity cannot be attained. Such, for example, is the conviction of sin. Convictions such as that cannot be attained by ordinary methods of research, but come more obviously (though not more really) than is the case with other convictions through the illumination of the Spirit of God.

But attainment even of these convictions is not really to be separated from philosophy or from science. A man cannot be truly scientific if he neglects relevant facts; he cannot be truly scientific if he neglects the fact of sin.

Thus we do hold that as defenders of Christianity we must meet non-Christian scientists and non-Christian philosophers on their own ground. But we meet them on their own ground armed with certain weapons which they do not possess—armed with certain facts to a knowledge of which they have not attained. That knowledge has been attained by us not by our own merit or by our own diligence in research but by the gracious illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Such knowledge of new facts which Christians alone have does not absolve us from a consideration of other facts which are known to non-Christian men. On the contrary the truth can be attained only by a consideration of *all* of the facts. We ought therefore not to despise either science or philosophy; we ought not to hold that the arguments even of non-Christian men are without importance for the defence of the Christian religion. We ought to try to lead scientists and philosophers to become Christians not by asking them to regard science and philosophy as without bearing upon religion, but on the contrary by asking them to become more scientific and more philosophic through attention to all, instead of to some, of the facts.

We are pleading, in other words, for a truly comprehensive apologetic—an apologetic which does not neglect the theistic proofs or the historical evidence of the New Testament account of Jesus, but which also does not neglect the facts of the inner life of man. The force of such an apologetic is, we think, cumulative; such an apologetic is strong in

its details; but it is even stronger because the details are embraced in a harmonious whole.

Dr. Mullins would hardly disagree with us here; there are indeed some specific utterances in his book which show that he does not disagree. But in the separation which in other places he sets up between science and philosophy and religion, he has introduced, we think, an inconsistent element that mars the symmetry and the stability of the apologetic edifice. That inconsistent element does not destroy our admiration for the many splendid features of this defence of the Christian faith. Most splendid of all, we think, is the fact that this author is ready to be polemic in defence of his faith. Dr. Mullins for his part detects the great issue of the day, and has decided it aright. We rejoice in the noble testimony of this Christian leader in our perplexing times.

But just because of our admiration for Dr. Mullins we have plucked up courage to set forth the points at which we feel constrained to differ from him. In the case of a writer less able and less truly Christian than he, the thing would have been hardly worth while. But in this book the good is so very good that we feel the more constrained to separate it from that which we are forced to regard as misleading if not bad. And we are not altogether without hope that consistency in Dr. Mullins' thinking may ultimately be attained—attained by an elimination of that to which we object in the interests of that which we sincerely and profoundly admire.

At any rate, we for our part cannot with safety go one step upon this anti-intellectual path. It may be safe for others; Dr. Mullins, for example, will never follow it to the end. But it would never be safe for us. We are not indeed without appreciation of its attractiveness. The apologetic battle in which Christianity is engaged is so sore that it is not surprising if men desire to avoid it. When scientists are attacking Christianity in the name of science and philosophers are attacking it in the name of philosophy, it seems to be such an easy escape from the battle to say that religion has its own credentials which it alone can judge; it seems so easy to

withdraw thus into a place that shall be free from all possible attack. Such is the epistemological By-path Meadow which is found in the separation of religion from science. It is pleasant to weary eyes and soothing to weary feet; and it seems to lie close along the way. But ultimately it leads to the castle of Giant Despair. We, therefore, are obliged to keep, by God's help, to the high, rough, intellectualistic road of a sound epistemology. That road leads past many a difficulty and through many a conflict. But there are some cooling arbors beside the way, for the refreshment of weary pilgrims. And at the end there is the City of God.

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